

Obituary. Wallingford Vt. Nov. 15  
1865

Editor Register:- The citizens of Middlebury were formerly well acquainted with Lieut. Edward B. Parker, late of Co. B. 1st Artillery 11th Vt. Vols., and a son of Eli B. Parker of your village. His terrible end has been alluded to in the public prints, but discredit has been thrown upon the tale, and it has been in a measure hushed up and forgotten. I propose to give a short account of his military career and character, and to narrate the incidents of his imprisonment and death as given me by an eye witness of the horrible affair. Vermont should remember it.

There is little need of mentioning his manly bearing, his attention to his business, and his upright straight forward demeanor in all his relations with others, while a resident of Middlebury. I trust that many there still remember him, and delight to honor him as one who "deserved well" of his country and nobly fell in its behalf.

Lieut. Parker enlisted in the Company above mentioned about the first of Aug., 1862. On the organization of the company, he was appointed among the Sergeants, partly on account of his recognized capacity, and partly because he had previously seen service with the 1st Vt., at Newport News. When the regiment assembled he was detailed as Color Sergeant, the selection being doubtless made on account of his splendid physique and noble carriage, as he stood much over

six feet in height, had a well proportioned symmetrical frame, was erect and prompt and looked every inch the soldier. His integrity of principle and uniform attention to duty, soon won for him his Lieutenantcy, and the more his character became known through the regiment, the better it was appreciated, until at the last he was universally respected and beloved.

"In a skirmish near the Weldon Road four miles south of Petersburg, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1864, St. Parker was captured by the enemy. He was serving at the time in Co. "A" by assignment. After a struggle of many hours in which the bravery of St. Parker was especially marked, (He has often been mentioned as conspicuous on that occasion among many who previously and subsequently earned great distinction,) the whole command engaged, comprising the 4<sup>th</sup> Vt. and five companies of the 11<sup>th</sup> Vt., was surrendered to an entire Brigade of Mahone's Division - Finnegans Florida Brigade, if my memory serves me.

From this point the narrative is in the words of Lieut. (since major) Henry R. Chase of the same regiment, whose truthfulness and accuracy I am ready to vouch.

"We were taken that night to Petersburg city, after being robbed of what ~~outside~~ <sup>outer</sup> clothing the rebels desired and, after two days, to Libby Prison when we were stripped of all our clothing for examination and what money could be found was taken by Dick Turner.

We were soon moved through Lynchburg, Danville, on to Macon, Ga., when sixteen or seventeen hundred of us were placed in a pen comprising about 13-4 acres. July 28, we reached Savannah, and Sept. 13, Charleston, S. C. when we were put in the jail-yard. This yard connects two large prisons by a wall some twenty feet high, and contains from 1-2 to 3-4 of an acre. This was the worst spot of all, for we were among the rebel criminals of every sex and description, such as murderers, thieves, and women of easy virtue, &c. On the 25th of Sept. we were allowed the benefit of a building called Roper Hospital, on taking a parole.

About the first of Oct. we were started for Columbia, S. C., and St. Parker and myself resolved to make our escape if possible; so we collected what provisions we could, expecting to abide fortune after that was gone. We canned some onions and red pepper to foil the dogs that might if they should get on our track.

Thus prepared we jumped off the cars about two miles above Branchville. A fellow prisoner dropped our provisions at the opposite door. Five shots were fired upon us, but without effect, and we started to make our lines in east Tennessee. In the daytime we lay in the woods or thickets, for all, from the boy of twelve to the grey-haired man, were soldiers and on the watch.

"About two o'clock on the morning of the 6th, traveling on the railroad, we came to a bridge that crossed the Congaree. Concluding that the bridge was so far from either army that it would not be guarded, we attempted to cross, were challenged, and asked if we had 'papers' On giving

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an affirmative answer the guard directed us to a little camp fire at the end of the bridge for examination. We took advantage of the sleepiness of the sentinel there, and made for the woods. Several shots were fired at us without effect. The guards got all the dogs near by, and tried to catch us that night, but they would not follow our track, or could not in the night.

"At a safe distance from the bridge, I took my shoes off and rubbed them and the soles of my socks with the onion. St. Parker said he had no faith in the medicine, and would not try it. Soon after daybreak, we heard the sound of dogs again, we made for the river as fast as possible, but did not reach it in time to save ourselves. There being no trees large enough to climb, we were obliged to face them on the ground.

"About 11 o'clock on the morning of the 6th, the dogs, thirteen in number, came upon us. St. Parker and myself were about three feet apart, each standing beside a little shrub. The dogs all passed me without notice, and made prey of St. Parker. I had a little club which I used as best I could keeping the dogs from his throat, [Maj. Chase has told me in conversation that he killed two of them - N.] till our pursuers, five in number, came to the scene of murder. They ordered me to surrender and knocked me down with the butt of a musket. When I came to myself I found the muzzle of the gun resting against my left breast, and the man who held it exclaimed: - "D - n you, if you don't surrender I'll shoot you through!" Upon this I surrendered. I should have done so before, but under excitement, trying



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to keep the dogs off St. Parker, I minded nothing about the Reb. After this they whipped the dogs from the Lieutenant, and we carried him to the nearest station.

He had been badly bitten in the legs, and his right side, so that it bled inwardly, and his arms were nearly torn from his body. He was bitten so badly that he was insensible when we took him up; for when the dogs attacked him they threw him on the ground immediately. A surgeon chanced to be at the station, who bandaged the wounds and rubbed them in turpentine, but expressed his opinion that the officer could not live.

We were sent to Columbia on the coming train and on our arrival St. Parker was sent to the hospital I suppose. I never saw him afterwards, but some rebel officers told us that he died the next day of yellow fever. He was bitten the 6th, and died the 7th, and his health being good all the time previous, we could not believe that his death resulted from any other cause than the dog bite. I should think it was from three to five minutes after the dogs came upon us before the men came up, and why the dogs did not touch me in passing as they did, I accounted for either from the use of the onion, or because they chanced to take his trail instead of mine.

Strenuous efforts were made to find the place of his burial, but without avail. I learned accidentally some weeks after his death that his money, \$110.00 (Confederate scrip) was appropriated by the rebels.

I have no heart to make any comments on the above account. The manifest propriety in affording his townspeople authoritative information concerning the manner of the dreadful

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end of this brave soldier and upright young man, is my excuse for presenting you the sickening details.

Aldace F. Walker.

MASOR, 11<sup>TH</sup> VT. VOIS.